

1. A method for stimulating host defense mechanisms in a mammal which method comprises administering to the mammal a stimulating amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being greater than about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon for a 70 kg human.
2. A method for stimulating an immune response in a mammal which method comprises administering to the mammal an immunostimulating amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being greater than about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon for a 70 kg human.
3. A method of claim 1 in which the effective dose of interferon is administered in a single dose.
4. A method of claim 1 in which the effective dose of interferon is administered in a plurality of smaller doses over a period of time sufficient to elicit immunostimulation equivalent to that of a single dose.
5. A method of claim 1 in which an immunostimulating dose of interferon is administered continuously over a period of time sufficient to elicit immunostimulation equivalent to that of a single dose.
6. A method for treating a neoplastic condition which method comprises administering to the mammal an effective amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being in excess of a dose of the same interferon which induces a pathological response when parenterally administered.

7. A method for treating a viral infection which method comprises administering to the mammal an effective amount of an interferon via oromucosal contact, said amount being in excess of a dose of the same interferon which induces a pathological response when parenterally administered.

8. A method of claim 1 wherein the interferon comprises a Type I interferon.

9. A method of claim 8 wherein the interferon is selected from the group consisting of IFN- $\alpha$ , IFN- $\beta$ , IFN- $\omega$ , consensus IFN, and mixtures thereof.

10. A method of claim 9 wherein the IFN- $\alpha$  comprises recombinant IFN- $\alpha$ .

11. A method of claim 1 wherein the interferon comprises a Type II interferon.

12. A method of claim 11 wherein the Type II interferon comprises  $\gamma$ -IFN.

13. A method of claim 1 wherein the neoplastic condition is of non-viral etiology.

14. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $1000 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon.

15. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $500 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon.

16. A method of claim 1 in which the dose of interferon is from about  $50 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $500 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon.

17. Interferon composition for oromucosal contact to stimulate host defense mechanisms or an immune response in a mammal which composition comprises a stimulating amount of the interferon, said amount exceeding that which would elicit a pathological response when parenterally administered.

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18. A pharmaceutical composition in unit dosage form adapted for oromucosal administration comprising from about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $1000 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon and a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

10 19. A composition of claim 18 comprising from about  $20 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $500 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon.

20. A composition of claim 18 comprising from about  $50 \times 10^6$  IU to about  $500 \times 10^6$  IU of interferon.

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